

**WASHINGTON, DC** – Congressman Rob Wittman (VA-1) today announced he has introduced legislation to bolster the structure of leadership at Arlington National Cemetery (ANC). Wittman's bill proposes the placement of a commissioned officer of the United States Military in charge of Army National Cemeteries, which includes ANC, to provide for greater accountability in the chain of command. Wittman has focused efforts on oversight and accountability as a member of the House Armed Services Committee following the reports of cemetery mismanagement that surfaced in 2010.

"With a uniformed commanding officer standing watch over those laid to rest at Arlington, there will be a standard of accountability and excellence, commitment, honor and integrity known by those serving in uniform," Wittman said. "The scandals and embarrassments that rocked Arlington went largely unprosecuted for one reason: no one in the former chain of command was held accountable for their actions and their gross negligence and mismanagement because none of those in the direct chain of command were commissioned military officers, meaning none of them was subject to the Uniform Code of Military Justice."

"Today, much of what was lost at our nation's most hallowed ground has been restored. I appreciate the efforts of the current leadership to restore the honor that was lost. I strongly believe our heroes buried at this cemetery run by the Department of the Army deserve the honor of having their last leader and commanding officer held to military standards of excellence and accountability to ensure that the unconscionable mistakes and crimes that occurred in the past at Arlington are never repeated."

During the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress, Wittman served as Chairman of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee and led multiple hearings on the past mismanagement by previous leadership and efforts to fix errors and modernize systems at ANC. Additionally, he met on a monthly basis

with the Executive Director of Army National Cemeteries on the progress being made at ANC to correct decades of neglect and poor leadership and management.

Under the measure, current leadership would remain in place until their tenure ends. In 2012, the House passed an identical measure authored by Wittman as part of the Fiscal Year 2013 National Defense Authorization Act, but the measure did not achieve passage in the Senate during the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress.

*Congressman Rob Wittman represents the First District of Virginia. He serves on the House Natural Resources Committee and the House Armed Services Committee where he is the Chairman of the Readiness Subcommittee.*

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